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ABSTRACT

In addition to academic pressures shared with American students, students from other countries studying in the United States have the stress of living in an unfamiliar culture. Common symptoms of culture shock (irritability, loneliness, depression, rigidity) have been identified. Parallel symptoms have been described in the learned helplessness literature. The application of reformulated learned helplessness to cultural adjustment can contribute to the understanding of culture shock. An individual's use of stable/unstable, global/specific, and internal/external attributions can affect his adjustment to a new culture. Several factors associated with cultural adjustment can be examined in light of reformulated learned helplessness. The main characteristic consistently listed as a factor in cultural adjustment is language proficiency. Prior travel experience also appears to mitigate against culture shock in a foreign culture. Another consistent factor related to adjustment in many studies is social interaction. Other studies have found that national origin and perceived discrimination are factors: students in the United States coming from Third World countries have more adjustment problems than do European or Western students. Depression across cultures and locus of control are also possible factors influencing culture shock. While the personal quality of self-concept has been found to have a clear relation to the attributional category of internal/external helplessness, the qualities of flexibility and empathy require further research to determine their relation to causal attributions and cultural adjustment. A review of the research in the areas of learned helplessness and culture shock indicates reformulated learned helplessness might have some applicability cross-culturally. A five-page reference list concludes the document. (NB)

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CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE U.S.: A REEVALUATION USING REFORMULATED LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

Doctoral Research Paper
for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

ROSEMEAD SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

BIOLA UNIVERSITY

MELINDA JUNE REINICKE

1986

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BY

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A doctoral research paper submitted to
Rosemead School of Psychology
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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE U.S.: A REEVALUATION USING REFORMULATED LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

BY

MELINDA JUNE REINICKE

In the literature on adjustment of international students in the United States a number of factors correlate with culture shock: language competence, prior travel, social interaction with hosts, national origin, and some personal qualities. These are examined to determine possible reformulated learned helplessness attributions (stable/unstable; global/specific; internal/external) which might be mediating adjustment. The culture shock research is shown to be compatible with what would be expected from the reformulated learned helplessness model. Furthermore, learned helplessness provides a conceptual framework for understanding factors in culture shock which previously appeared unrelated. Research is needed to empirically examine this relationship.

Cultural Adjustment of International Students in the U.S.: A Reevaluation Using Reformulated Learned Helplessness

More than 330,000 students from other countries were pursuing degrees at United States colleges and universities in 1984. In addition to academic pressures shared with U.S. students, these internationals have the stress of an unfamiliar culture. Sojourner adjustment, culture shock, culture fatigue and acculturation are all terms for the psychological disturbance involved in adaption to a new culture. Similar symptoms are described in the learned helplessness literature. This suggests that the model of learned helplessness may be useful in understanding culture shock. In this paper culture shock research will be reevaluated utilizing the conceptual framework of learned helplessness.

In his review, Brislin (1981) lists the common symptoms of culture shock: irritability, excessive concern with health, distrust and hostility toward members of the new culture (hosts), feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and depression, withdrawal from the host culture, heightened positive evaluation of the home culture, rigidity, and lowered work performance. Peterson & Seligman (1984) describe parallel symptoms in their review of learned helplessness literature. When an uncontrollable, negative event occurs the victim construes reasons for the situation. These construed explanations, known as attributions, can

result in various degrees of deficits in motivation, cognition, emotions and self-esteem.

While culture shock has been found in people of all nationalities and in all host countries, no one sojourner experiences all the possible symptoms. The range and intensity of symptoms correlate with certain demographic variables such as language competence, prior travel and home country (to name a few). Attributional processes which might mediate culture shock have not been explored in the literature. In his review, Church (1982) notes the focus has been on symptoms and outcomes rather than the dynamics of the adjustment process. It is the position of this paper that attributions the person makes regarding his/her situation impact the pattern of cultural adjustment. Culture shock research regarding international students in the U.S. will be reevaluated in the light of reformulated learned helplessness theory. Possible attributions will be explored which could account for the correlation of demographic factors with adjustment. Understanding culture shock from this framework has implications for intervention with international students at risk.

Background on Culture Shock

In the early years of attention to culture shock the Peace Corps attempted to prevent symptoms in its overseas workers. Now culture shock is accepted as a normal stress reaction and necessary for healthy adaption to an alien country (Brislin, 1981). Total absence of symptoms or

extreme reactions (psychotic breaks or suicidal ideation) are recognized as undesirable extremes on a continuum. Absence of problems indicates a lack of genuine cross cultural interaction. The sojourner might be surrounding himself exclusively with co-nationals and never experience contact with hosts. Within the midrange of the continuum, normal adjustment reactions can be highly stressful, but culminate eventually in a psychological sense of well-being, interactive effectiveness with hosts and task effectiveness (Ruben & Kealey, 1979). Severe symptoms mean the adjustment process is blocked and the sojourner needs help to move into a more comfortable style of living with the new cultural demands.

Two types of concepts have been utilized to explain the general etiology of culture shock: behavioral and attributional. However, this attributional theory is qualitatively different from reformulated learned helplessness attributions which will be discussed later. The behavioral approach recognizes that in a new culture there is a loss of cues for appropriate behavior and this leads to a lack of reinforcement. Guthrie (1979) discusses culture fatigue as "a superb experimental neurosis" (p. 363) in which the environment clearly causes a previously healthy individual to break down. The symptoms cease immediately if the sojourner returns home. Guthrie sees the new culture as an extinction schedule of past reinforcers. He notes that experimental animals typically become aggressive on extinction schedules and believes this explains the

sojourner's irritability and hostility toward hosts. He also sees parallels to Seligman's 1975 work on learned helplessness where outcome has no relationship to efforts. David (1976) discusses not only the loss of reinforcers, but the presentation of aversive new stimili such as strange food or activities. These behavioral explanations for culture shock are necessary, but not sufficient. They do not allow for human beings as conscious organisms which interpret their environment.

An attributional explanation for the etiology of culture shock focuses additionally on interpersonal processes (Taft, 1977). The host action (A) is interpreted (B) by the sojourner and results in (C) conclusion/outcome. But, the meaning ascribed (B) by the sojourner may be very different from the meaning intended by the host and results in conflicted outcomes.

Attributional misunderstandings are utilized in Culture Assimilators - a method of teaching a new culture to outsiders. Through questionnaires administered to hosts and sojourners, Culture Assimilator researchers determine important areas of misunderstanding. The differing attributions and expectations are then taught to sojourners who will be interacting cross-culturally. (Albert & Adamopoulos, 1980). A variety of assimilators have been developed for specific pairs of cultures (i.e., American-Arab; American-Japanese). This has been one of the most effective orientation approaches devised. However, like

behavioral concepts, it is necessary but not sufficient to explain culture shock. The focus is on meaning ascribed to others' behavior rather than on meaning ascribed to one's own personal frustrations.

An example may help to distinguish the interpersonal attributions of Culture Assimilators from the intrapersonal attributions involved in reformulated learned helplessness. An American tells a Hungarian that she has beautiful eyes. To the American's surprize she appears to have been hurt by this. Later, he discovers that in her country people compliment eyes when there is nothing else to compliment. It is somewhat like the American practice of saying, "She has a nice personality," in answer to the question, "Is she attractive?". And so the American intended a compliment; the Hungarian heard an insult. They had a conflict in interpersonal attributions.

The intrapersonal attribution is the internal meaning an individual gives to her/his experiences. The Hungarian has several options for how to view the negative event of the American comment. She can believe she is unattractive or that it is only this one American who thinks she is unattractive or she can believe all Americans are prejudiced against her nationality.

The negative event which has occurred in the environment is based on an interpersonal misunderstanding. The effects of this negative event depend on the personal meaning she gives it. Of course, if she discovers the cultural misunderstanding and is able to laugh about it a

negative event no longer exists. However, she might be terribly embarrassed that she misunderstood the American and so could still experience a negative event (i.e., "I am stupid " instead of "I am unattractive"). So the aim of cultural assimilators is to decrease the number of negative events which occur between people of two cultures.

Reformulated learned helplessness has ramifications at a different level: when negative events occur, how does the individual respond and what is the least damaging way to respond? Some negative events are, in reality, intentional on the part of the hosts (i.e., Americans who slash the tires of an Iranian student's car). Other negative events are non-personal and entail university regulations or strange food. Some negative events are more noncontingent, long term or more far reaching. But, the key is ultimately in how the student chooses to view these events. The student's conclusions about self and the resulting emotional ramifications are accounted for by the model of learned helplessness.

Background on Learned Helplessness

In 1978 Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale reformulated the model of learned helplessness. The basis of both the original and reformulated model is the same: cognitive frameworks within the individual account for helplessness more than the actual situation external to the individual. For example, students were exposed to a condition where a button was supposed to stop aversive noise but did not

(Hirota, 1974). The students gave up on the button and so did not discover it was working later. Their expectation that effort (pushing the button) had nothing to do with outcome (stopping aversive noise) kept them from initiating responses which would stop the noise. The effects of learned helplessness are conceptualized as deficits in four main areas: a) Motivation - there is a retarded initiation of responses. b) Cognition - the individual expects outcomes to be uncontrollable. c) Emotions - there is depressed affect. d) Self Concept - Self esteem is lowered.

The deficits exist when a negative event occurs which is perceived as noncontingent by the victim. Nothing he or she does seems to affect the outcome. The negative event may be an aversive unavoidable outcome or a desirable unobtainable outcome. The outcome must be of importance to the individual. Spending a night in jail would have different meaning for a middle class citizen as opposed to a career criminal. So with these preconditions a person finds himself helpless and asks "Why?". Three attributional dimensions apparently answer his question and influence the intensity of his helplessness: stable vs. unstable; global vs specific and internal vs. external. These dimensions are the contribution of reformulated learned helplessness.

In stable attributions the victim expects the negative situation to be long term or recurrent. He will be prone to chronic helplessness deficits and feels, "This always happens to me." In the unstable attribution the victim views the negative situation as short term or a one time

event. His helplessness will be acute rather than chronic.

Global attributions expect the negative event to occur across a wide range of situations. The individual inappropriately generalizes expectation of non-contingency to new controllable situations. Failure on a math exam is inappropriately generalized so that the student expects to fail all exams. In contrast, a specific attribution perceives the negative event in a narrower range of situations. The student might decide the exam was particularly tough, but believes other exams won't be. He would only feel helpless if he had to take the same exam over again.

With internal attributions the victim believes he or she is the only person experiencing the negative event. He is somehow different than everyone else. It is a personal helplessness and results in lowered self-esteem. "I failed the exam because I'm stupid." With external attributions the victim believes others would also experience the negative event. It is a universal view of helplessness and leaves self-esteem undamaged. "I failed the exam because it was badly written and everyone else did poorly too."

In summary, stable/unstable attributions affect chronicity of the helplessness. Global/specific attributions affect the range of the helplessness. Internal/external attributions affect the level of self-esteem in the helplessness. The worse possible combination of these dimensions is characterized by a stable, global,

internal attribution. The resulting deficits will be chronic, far reaching, and include low self-esteem.

Table 1 illustrates these attributions and their interactions.

Table 1

Attributions for a Negative Event of Difficulty in Understanding the Professor

	INTERNAL Personal Helplessness		EXTERNAL Universal Helplessness	
	STABLE Recurrent	UNSTABLE Short-term	STABLE Recurrent	UNSTABLE Short-term
GLOBAL Broad Range	I'm stupid.	I'm exhausted.	Americans are stupid.	Americans are irritable today because its April 15th.
SPECIFIC Narrow range	I don't understand English well.	I don't understand this one professor's English very well.	This professor is not a good communicator.	Professor is tired & not communicating well today.

Reformulated Learned Helplessness And Culture Shock Factors

A great deal of the current research on culture shock has investigated demographic variables rather than inner attributions of internationals. Studies have examined which internationals are at risk with a focus on characteristics of people, rather than on the cognitive processes within people. Students with better language competence have less discomfort than students with poorer language competence (Benson, 1978; Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982; Deutsch & Won, 1963; Lee, Abd-ella, & Burks, 1981; Pruitt, 1978; Selltiz, Christ, Havel, & Cook, 1963; Spaulding & Flack, 1976; Surdam & Collins, 1984). Students with prior travel

experience adjust more easily than those away from home the first time (Church, 1982; Hull, 1978; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, et al., 1981; Pruitt, 1978; Selltiz, et al., 1963). Students from European countries adjust more easily than students from the third world (Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982; DeArmond, 1983; Furnham & Trezise, 1983; Kleinberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, et al., 1981; Selltiz, et al., 1963; Spaulding & Flack, 1976; Surdam & Collins, 1984). Students who interact with both hosts and co-nat'ls have fewer adjustment problems than students isolated with either group (Alexander, Klein, Workneh, & Miller, 1981; Church, 1982; Hull, 1978; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, et al., 1981; Pruitt, 1978; Ruben & Kealy, 1979; Selltiz, et al., 1963; Spaulding & Flack, 1976; Surdam & Collins, 1984). Flexibility, non-authoritarianism, empathy and high self-concept each correlate positively with better adjustment (Alexander, et al., 1981; Barna, 1983; Benson, 1978; Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982; Crano & Crano, 1985; Kagitcibasi, 1978; Kleinberg & Hull, 1979; Nishida, 1985; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Stening, 1978).

All of these factors are important to know. However, it is a black box analysis. Why do students with these characteristics fare better or worse? What is the inner mechanism of these factors which mediates the impact of culture shock? Most of the research is correlational and does not direct intervention strategies. For instance, knowing that prior travel correlates positively with better adjustment is not helpful in reducing culture shock for

students. However, looking at what students with prior travel learned during their first sojourn might produce constructs which could be taught to first timers and aid in their adjustment.

The bulk of this paper will re-examine the factors associated with adjustment in the light of reformulated learned helplessness. The attributions of internal, stable and global causation are the worse combination for depression and learned helplessness. If the different demographic variables can be understood in terms of mitigating against any one of those three factors then the demographic variables would contribute to adjustment ease. While it might not be possible to predict what specfic combination of attributions exist for an international with certain characteristics, we might be able to rule out the worst possible attribution cells.

Language

The main characteristic consistently listed as a factor in adjustment is language proficiency. In their reviews of the literature Benson (1978), Brislin (1981), Church (1982), and Spaulding & Flack (1976) all conclude that problems in English adversely affect academic performance, social interactions and general adjustment. We will briefly review a few of the key studies.

Deutsch & Won (1963) surveyed 94 foreign technical trainees studying here in the U.S. from 29 different nations. Self- report ratings of high language competency

correlated positively with greater satisfaction with the sojourn, training and social interaction.

Pruitt (1978) assessed adaption of 296 sub-Saharan African students at nine American campuses with a self-administered multiple choice questionnaire. She found that students attending English language institutes had poorer adjustment (indicated more problems on a checklist) than students attending colleges or universities. Language institutes teach English to students who's language level is not high enough to be accepted into colleges or universities. The 143 internationals in Surdam & Collins (1984) study were from 35 countries. They were interviewed and completed an extensive questionnaire adapted from Pruitt's. Students who believed their English was adequate were significantly better adapted (fewer problems on a checklist) than those who believed it to be inadequate.

Spradley & Phillips (1972) compared cultural stress between American Peace Corps volunteers, Chinese students in the U.S. and American students with no cross-cultural experience. They were asked to imagine themselves living in another culture for one year and rate items on the amount of readjustment which would be needed. In the ranking of stressors all three groups rated language as the most anxiety producing readjustment.

Selltiz, et al. (1963) rated the English skill of students based on a one session interview. The subsequent survey results showed that poor English correlated with non-academic aspects of the students' lives more than academic

performance. Lee, et al. (1981) questioned internationals regarding eight skills items within linguistic needs. Those rated highest were: understanding spoken English, reading texts & journals, and writing papers. Conversational English was rated as least important. Lee, et al. went further by asking students for Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores as well as student self-evaluations of language ability. [TOEFL scores are used by colleges and universities as international student entrance requirements and correlate with future academic success (Spaulding & Flack, 1976)]. In general, higher TOEFL scores and higher self-ratings both correlated with better adjustment on a number of factors. Lee found that TOEFL scores were not as strongly related on as many adjustment factors as self-evaluations of language ability.

Despite the wide variety of adjustment criteria and the subjective and objective measures of language ability, the results are all similar. In the correlational studies the relationship of adjustment and language competence was stronger than adjustment and any other factors such as prior travel, home country, amount of social interaction, etc.

The other demographic variables to be discussed in this paper have a major impact on causal attributions. However, language facility probably impacts preconditions for helplessness more than it impacts causal attributions. The two preconditions for helplessness are: a) an uncontrollable negative event must be perceived and b) it

must be of importance to the victim. Language skill evidently prevents negative events of communication difficulties from occurring and so less helplessness occurs. Helplessness studies typically set a 50% success rate to induce helplessness. Language competence might be viewed as raising the international's success rate in cross-cultural communication. Poor language skills would increase failures and helplessness.

In addition, the importance of language is critical since it affects the main goal of international students in the U.S.: attaining a degree (Lee, et al., 1981). TOEFL scores have repeatedly been shown to predict academic performance (Spaulding & Flack, 1976). Remember that internationals valued classroom English skills more highly than conversation skills in Lee's study. For most internationals social interaction with Americans is only a secondary goal in which they do not invest at the expense of studies (Lee, et al., 1981; Alexander, et al., 1981). This could explain Selltiz's paradoxical findings that English skills affected nonacademic rather than academic success. They assessed conversational English, not the understanding of spoken English, reading or writing.

If English skills are poor, the international student will experience more negative communication events and these negative events jeopardize the much desired goal of a degree. Some students do suffer academic failure and early return home. Many are funded by U.S. or home country grant programs and must maintain a certain grade point average to

be eligible for funding. The majority of students have grades equal to or better than their American peers (Mestanhauser, 1981). No statistics were found regarding the percent of early withdrawals or academic probations, but no one denies they occur. Adjustment was usually measured by a checklist of self-report problem areas rather than objective academic records. While most international students eventually cope successfully (Brislin, 1981), it is estimated that 15 to 25% have significant adjustment problems (DeArmond, 1983; Klineberg & Hull, 1979).

One aspect of the research cited indicates a relation to possible causal attributions: Lee's finding that self-evaluation of language competence were more strongly related than TOEFL scores to a greater number of positive adjustment indices. Confidence in one's language ability more than actual high ability might have mitigated against stable causal attributions ("I will not be able to improve my English") and thereby contributed to less chronic helplessness. There would be less of an expectation of misunderstandings and more attempts at interaction. This in turn, would provide opportunity for more practice and improvement in English skills. However, expectation of failure would lead to the characteristic motivation deficits of learned helplessness and fewer attempts. Believing one has poor language skills could well be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Such attributions are not debilitating only because of emotional effects; the motivational and cognitive

deficits preclude behavioral disconfirmation.

Either internal/external or global/specific attributions could be made regarding language difficulties. (See Table 1). However, internal, stable, global attributions in the area of language would have understandably disastrous effects on the student. She/he would be confronted constantly with negative communication events which would bring self-blame and deficits.

Two examples might clarify and summarize the points made. Belkys, a woman from Brazil, has lower TOEFL scores than Aki, a man from Japan. However, she has external, unstable, and specific attributions about miscommunication episodes. She might tell herself: "My English is pretty good, but some Americans do not take time to listen to me. They are too impatient with my accent."
She is not inhibited about jumping into conversations and enjoys the challenge of finding the right words. Aki, however, is mortified when he makes linguistic mistakes or finds people staring at him perplexed. His English skills are actually objectively better than Belkys', but he speaks up in class less and less because of his internal, stable, global attributions about himself: "I show great disrespect for my American friends when I use the wrong words. If I were more honorable and more intelligent I would study harder and have a better vocabulary." Linguistic level determines the number of negative miscommunication events. However, the meaning given to these events is just as important as the frequency of occurance.

Prior Travel

The experience of previously being in a foreign culture somehow mitigates against culture shock in a new foreign culture. This observation appears repeatedly in the literature to be reviewed in this section. A related variable is age since older int'ls sometimes have had more opportunities for other travel experiences. The relationship, however, between age and prior travel is not consistent; age is not a strongly correlated factor with adjustment, but prior travel is.

Selltiz, et al. (1963) found that internationals with prior travel experience had less adjustment problems than those without prior travel. Prior travel was positively related to academic and emotional adjustment. These same students also had more social involvement with U.S. students. Age and living away from home before coming to the U.S. did not appear to have a significant impact on adjustment. Hull (1978) found that students with no previous international experience had more adjustment problems than students who had traveled abroad more than one month continuously. In their 1979 study, Kleinberg & Hull concluded that the two most important factors for the culture shock coping process were prior foreign experience and social contact with hosts. They hypothesized that a third factor, such as "friendly to foreigners" might be affecting both. Lee et al. (1981) and Church (1982), in their reviews of the literature, found that age and marital

status were inconsistently correlated with adjustment. However, prior travel correlated with more satisfaction of needs being met in the U.S. In their own questionnaire study of internationals, Lee's researchers found that older students were more satisfied academically and married students somewhat more satisfied overall. Pruitt (1978) studied African students in the U.S. and found younger ages correlated with better adjustment, but prior travel was not assessed. Church (1982) concluded from his review that previous cross-cultural experience can facilitate or inhibit adjustment depending on the nature of the experience. For example, if the older students from Pruitt's study had previous cross-cultural experience which had been negative (incidentally the total group identified racial discrimination as a major problem area), then they might expect another negative experience now in the U.S.

Learned helplessness provides a theoretical framework for these results. Abramson, et al. (1978) explain that forgetting of helplessness can be caused "either by earlier mastery learning or subsequent mastery learning." (p. 56). Recalling past successes or experiencing real successes now could shift attributions toward external and unstable categories. Prior experience of successfully adapting after culture shock would, therefore, influence internationals to view culture shock as a common occurance for sojourners (external) rather than something wrong with them individually. They would also tend to view the culture shock as unstable since it didn't last forever before.

The global/specific category of attributions is probably not influenced either way by prior experience. Spradley & Phillips (1972) had American Peace Corps volunteers, Chinese students in the U.S. and American students with no cross-cultural experience rate the amount of stress imagined on a list of 33 problem areas. Rankings were similar for all three groups. However, the two groups with cross-cultural experience reduced the magnitude of adjustment estimations. In other words, the American students without cross-cultural experience ranked stressors the same as the other groups, however the magnitude of their ratings were higher. They expected the adjustment areas to be much more stressful than did their experienced comparison groups.

In the context of a bad previous experience, as mentioned by Church, the international could be influenced toward internal and stable attributions and this would contribute to more helplessness. Many of these students might not even attempt another cross-cultural experience unless there was no way to obtain the desired training in their home or similar countries. So the majority of experienced sojourners might be a self-selected group having positive prior experiences.

Social Interaction with Hosts

Another consistent factor related to adjustment in a variety of studies is social interaction. Optimum adjustment is fostered by interaction with both co-nationals

and hosts. Internationals who isolate themselves in either group have more adjustment problems than students who interact in both groups. Internationals having high interaction with hosts fare better than low interacters. [Similarly, overseas Americans are more satisfied with their sojourn when they interact frequently with host nationals of that country]. (Alexander, et al., 1981; Church, 1982; Hull, 1978; Kleinberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, et al., 1981; Pruitt, 1978; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Selltiz, et al., 1963; Spaulding & Flack, 1976; Surdam & Collins, 1984). The studies defined adjustment in a number of ways: satisfaction with sojourn, academic success, social satisfaction, positive attitudes toward the host country, personal sense of well-being, and/or the number of problems indicated on a checklist such as loneliness and homesickness. Most measured social interaction by self-report, but a few utilized behavioral observations.

It is possible for international students to isolate themselves in a co-national bubble and barely have any kind of cross-cultural experience. They simply affiliate with co-nationals, attain a degree, and return home. They might not report much subjective pain during the sojourn, but they usually return home with negative evaluations of Americans (Brislin, 1981; Lee, et al, 1981). However, the majority of internationals desire some amount of interaction with hosts even if it is a secondary goal compared to academic pursuits (Alexander, et al., 1981). In addition to their survey of internationals, Alexander's group conducted a

smaller study of 59 Far Eastern students (from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Ethiopia) which found that after one year only 50% had friendships with as many Americans as they had hoped for; 14% reported making no American friends. Those who managed such friendships were characterized by high self-confidence, good communication skills and less identification with home. Personal contacts were defined as talking personally, going out, or eating together as opposed to casual contacts of talking about studies or seeing each other in class. In a third study, Alexander and team found that 87% of Korean & Taiwanese students reported they either never or rarely ate with Americans. Other studies confirm that the majority of internationals are disappointed with the quality and amount of contact with Americans (Klineberg & Hull, 1978; Lee, et al., 1981; Pruitt, 1978; Selltiz, et al., 1963).

Failure to meet salient goals causes frustration and helplessness. In his review, Stening (1979) concluded that "more misunderstandings occur between cross national than same culture interactions. This is damaging to the relationship and task effectiveness." (p. 301). Trial and error attempts at gaining American friendships leads to negative consequences which inhibit future interactions. When the international withdraws into a co-national enclave she/he no longer attempts to interact with hosts which, in turn, makes any positive interactions even less possible.

Of course, the worse possible situation is the

international student with no co-national support group; unless he/she manages to make American friends, he/she will be totally isolated. In learned helplessness terms, this student will experience more negative events since there is immmersion in a new culture with no co-nationals as a retreat for relaxed interaction. The attributions are likely to be internal since the lone international is the only one experiencing the adjustment problems, global since it is with everyone the student has contact with, and stable since the experience is continuous.

The international with both American and co-national friends is likely to have a very different framework: fewer negative events since social interactions occur with a difficult group (hosts) and a more familiar group (co-nationals), external attributions since they share adjustment experiences with other co-nationals, specific since the negative events only happen with Americans, and unstable since they are (hopefully) exposed to other co-nationals further along in successfully adjusting to the U.S. social and cultural milieu.

National Origin

A demographic variable frequently studied is national origin as it relates to adjustment. The consistent finding is that students in the U.S. coming from third world countries have more adjustment difficulties than European and western students (Brislin, 1981; DeArmond, 1983; Church, 1982; Furnham & Trezise, 1983; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, et al., 1981; Selltiz, et al., 1963; Spaulding &

Flack, 1976; Surdam & Collins, 1984). This is particularly sobering since the overwhelming majority of internationals studying here are third world students (Institute of International Education, 1984/85). Students from South and East Asia alone account for 40% of the total.

The first world consists of industrialized nations such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The second world is composed of nations with non-market economies. They are industrialized, but not as much as the first world. These countries include the Soviet Union and other communist Eastern European satellites. The third world is made up of the remaining 120 developing nations where the economies are generally based on agriculture and most people are poor: Mexico, South American countries, African and Middle East nations, and Asian countries.

A variety of explanations are possible for the vulnerability of third world students to adjustment problems in the U.S. These include differences in modernization, cultural distance, racial/ethnic discrimination and cultural differences in attributional styles.

Differences in modernization appears to have been overated (Brislin, 1981). For instance, in Surdam & Collins study (1983), 50% of the students were from cities with populations of 200,000 or more. 60% fund their educations and living expenses from savings or family support (Institute of International Education, 1984/85). They are

not generally from lower socioeconomic levels; 82% are from urban areas and are often offended by the ignorance of Americans regarding their country (i.e., the assumption Africans all live in huts surrounded by tigers and elephants) (Klineberg & Hull, 1979). One of the most modern nations in the world, Japan, is not a third world country. However, Japanese students in the U.S. still experience significant adjustment difficulties (Spaulding & Flack, 1979). This indicates that something other than differences in modernization is impacting the adjustment of third world students.

A more accurate explanation is the degree of cultural distance between third world countries and the U.S. Furnham & Bochner (1982) gave three questionnaires to 200 foreign students and found that the greater the differences between host community and native community, the more difficulty students experienced in everyday situations. Foust (1981) concludes from his review of cross-cultural communication that time & energy for simple communication increases as cultural differences increase. This is more than verbal communication and includes all the non-verbal and behavioral cues required in smooth interaction. Barna (1983) explains how the long process of socialization in the original country trained the sojourner to participate successfully in that culture. However, the new country has values, role expectations and behavior patterns for which he/she is not socialized. There is suddenly an inability to anticipate events correctly; the sojourner experiences discontinuity

between his/her own behavior and expected consequences. Meanings are not shared by others and formerly adaptive behaviors are no longer effective. For example, Nigerian students show respect by avoiding eye contact (Idowu, 1985). However, Americans often view this an an indication of guilt. They interpret the Nigerian's averted eyes as a sign of dishonesty.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) discovered that American grantees overseas had better adjustment in Europe than in the Near or Middle East. So the fit between certain cultures appears to be two-way. Some pairs of cultures will have greater friction than others (Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Graham, 1983).

Racial/ethnic discrimination appears to be another reason for the greater difficulties of third world students (Hossain & LaBerge, 1985; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Pruitt, 1978; Stening, 1979; Surdam & Collins, 1984). Third world students not only behave differently then Americans, they also look different. From studies of American minorities one might expect African students to suffer more discrimination. Patterson, Sedlacek, & Perry (1984) found black Americans were more likely to view themselves as victims of discrimination than were Asian, Hispanic or white students. However, <u>within</u> third world nationalities there are no consistent rankings of most or least discriminated against; most or least perceived discrimination; most or least adjusted. A number of these studies report inter-

relationships among nationality and major factors already discussed in this paper.

In his review Church, (1983) found West Europeans and Canadians to be the best adjusted and also the most socially involved with Americans. Asian students were the least adjusted and also least socially involved with Americans. He categorized the Indians, Black Africans, Latin Americans and Middle Easterners as falling between these two extremes with no particular ranking.

Selltiz, et al. (1963) studied European and non-European students who had equal amounts of social interaction with hosts; the Europeans were still better adjusted. Klineberg & Hull (1979) found that Asians were more disatisfied at the end of their sojourns no matter what country they studied in. This was true even when they had much contact with locals. However, Klineberg & Hull discovered a greater percent of Asians had less prior travel experience than the other groups. When only Asians with prior travel experience were compared with other 3rd world internationals there was no difference in adjustment satisfaction. Latin Americans were the most likely to evaluate their experience at one extreme or the other: they felt things were all going very well or very poorly. Arab speaking students had the most contact with their own co-national group and were the most dissatisfied with academic aspects of the sojourn. Black Africans had difficulties and problems, but less widespread and less extreme than those presented by the Asians.

When Lee and colleagues (1981) excluded Europeans they found Latin American students to be the most satisfied with their sojourn; Arabic speaking students were the least satisfied. Students were also questioned specifically about their satisfaction with equal treatment and respect from professors and U.S. students. From most to least satisfied the cultural areas were: Europe, Latin America, South & East Asia, Africa, and Near East (Arabic). Houssain & LaBerge (1985) surveyed students and reported the percentages of each group which felt discriminated against by U.S. students and the community: Europeans - 5%; India - 9%; Asian - 30%; Taiwan - 38%; African - 40%; Latin - 53%. They also found that more discrimination correlated with self-perceived language problems.

Klineberg & Hull (1979) surveyed international students worldwide and found that internationals in all countries were friendlier toward host countries on arrival than after a period of residence. Internationals in the U.S. were average compared to internationals in other countries in reporting they or their relatives had experienced discrimination in the host country. Both discrimination and depression correlated with an overall negative experience. Surdam & Collins (1984) found that 33% of their 136 randomly selected internationals reported experiencing discrimination and were significantly less well adapted than those not reporting discrimination.

Regarding status perception, Lee, et al. (1981) had

third world students rate themselves on academic performance, intelligence, physical appearance and country's prestige. Each third world student also rated how they believed American students would evaluate them on these same status markers. The majority of third world internationals estimated American ratings of them to be lower than their own ratings of themselves. Similary, Stening (1979) concluded:

> "Where expatriates believed that the hosts accorded the expatriate's country a lower status than the expatriate believed it deserved, the expatriates tended to have unfavorable attitudes towards the host country." (p 298).

However, when expatriates believed hosts rated the expatriate country higher than the expatriate did himself, then the expatriate was likely to have a favorable attitude toward hosts. If the international rated his status low and also believed hosts rated him low, a negative attitude toward hosts did not neccesarily follow.

In a study by Bochner & Perks (1971) Asians believed their national role (ethnicity) was more salient for Australians than it actually was. If an Australian store clerk were rude to an Asian, the Asian believed it was due to racial discrimination. However, if an Asian store clerk were rude to an Australian, the Australian attributed it to the clerk's occupation or personal problems, not racial hostility.

Penn & Durham (1978) surveyed both internationals and U.S. students regarding barriers to interaction. The internationals felt that difficulty understanding the

language and unfamiliarity with American customs were major barriers. The American students had a different ranking of barriers: unfamiliarity with foreign customs, misinterpretation of actions, dislike of particular national groups, dislike of personal characteristics, and lastly, language problems.

In his study of Polynesian, Asian and American first year students at a multicultural campus in Hawaii, Graham (1983) found differences between culture groups on what they experienced to be the most annoying trait in other cultures on campus. Mainland U.S. students and New Zealanders identified "foreign language speaking in mixed cultural groups" as the most annoying trait of others. Chinese and Japanese students identified rudeness in public places as the most irritating trait. All the racial groups except Samoans disliked Samoans most. Samoans had the highest self-rating of stress and language difficulties. In a total group ranking of who was liked best, Hawaiian, Japanese Chinese and American were the top four in that order out of nine ethnic groups. All ethnic groups were asked who outside their own culture they would consider marrying. The total group rankings were American caucasian, Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese and New Zealander in that order.

These studies indicate a complicated relationship between race, culture, perceived/actual discrimination and other previously discussed factors influencing adjustment. Well designed studies are needed to clearly delineate the inter-relationships here. From what we do know it appears

discriminatory treatment is a common negative event for international students. Equally important, the international's expectation of discrimination (whether realistic or unrealistic) will affect her/his evaluation of host country, sojourn, and personal well being.

Learned helplessness explains that the intensity of cognitive and motor deficits increases with certainty of non-contingency. The intensity of depressed affect increases with both certainty of non-contingency and importance of the event to the person. Those internationals expecting discrimination but feeling they deserved it (Stening) would not necessarily experience a negative event. This would not be aversive and they apparently make no attributions regarding it. However, most internationals reporting discrimination or unequal treatment did find it aversive and it negatively impacted adjustment.

Experiencing racial/cultural discrimination would be a difficult situation to deal with no matter what type of attributions the international utilized. Like language, this factor might be most damaging not because of attributions, but because of its impact on sheer number of negative events. The nature of being discriminated against due to membership in an outgroup would tend toward external (shared) attributions rather than internal (personal) ones. Stable/unstable and global/specific attributions would probably depend on planned length of stay and the internationals' experiences with acceptance in their home

country.

We have examined differences in modernization, cultural distance and racial/ethnic discrimination as explanations for third world vulnerability to culture shock. The final possibility we will discuss is the most complicated. Is there any indication that third world cultures are more disposed toward certain attributional styles? Do some third world philosophies of life contribute to more helplessness? Future research on causal attributions between culture groups is needed to answer this question. However, we can gain some insight into this possibility by examining other research areas: cross-cultural studies on ethnic variations and incidence of depression as well as cross-cultural research on locus of control.

Depression Across Cultures

Third world philosophies of life tend toward less of an emphasis on personal control of the environment and more emphasis on fate. Tradition is often more important than the American value of change. Group welfare and cooperation may be a higher priority than individualism and competition. Indirectness and saving face may be valued over directness, openess and honesty. (Kohls, 1984; McGoldrick, Pearce & Giordano, 1982).

If third world philosophies of life predispose one toward more helplessness we would expect to see a greater incidence of depression in those geographical regions. However, this is not the case (Marsella, 1973) If anything, American culture is more prone to depression than

non-western nations (except in urban areas). Some argue this could be because of under-utilization of mental health services in developing countries due to severe social stigma; others theorize improper diagnoses. However, Tseng & Hsu (1980) believe cultures with a nonantagonistic orientation to nature simply adjust to not overcoming. They have a lower percentage of chronic psychiatric patients and a lower percentage of relapses (Marsella, 1980). In effect, fatalism alleviates stress and depression since the patient is not at fault. Because of this, self concept is not as involved. Depression in non-western countries is often expressed somatically while in the U.S. depression has both psychological and somatic components.

This corroborates the findings of a survey of student health services at the University of Wisconsin (Alexander, et al., 1981). These researchers discovered U.S. and international students had the same percentage of visits but had different types of presenting problems. Internationals had more gastro-intestinal, general/undifferentiated, psychosomatic and pain complaints. U.S. and international students also had the same percentage of psychological complaints. However, within this percentage internationals had more severe depressive episodes and acute paranoid disorders. So internationals did not come in contact with mental health services except in these extreme cases. This is usually after less stigmatizing co-national support systems have been exhausted

(DeArmond, 1983; Higginbotham, 1979).

These findings do not point to the more severe attributional style of internal, global, stable causation. On the contrary, we would expect third world students to make external attributions and to feel less self-blame. However, learned helplessness theory reminds us that severe depression can occur without self-esteem being involved. All that is needed is perceived noncontingency and high importance of the thwarted goal. Abramson, et al. (1978) gives the example of two people without jobs. One attributes unemployment to the national economy (external). This individual will have the characteristic negative cognitions, passivity (deficit in motivation) and depressed affect. The second person attributes unemployment to personal incompetence (internal). She/he will have negative cognitions, passivity, depressed affect and low self-esteem. The first individual may have greater depression even without low self-esteem if he/she faces losing a home because of the unemployment. If the second person is a college student with family financial support, there might be less intense depression despite the lowered self-esteem. Importance of the goal is the key here.

Locus of control and cross-cultural studies.

Does a more passive world view necessarily result in external attributions? The internal/external attributions of reformulated learned helplessness refer to social comparison. The person asks, "Did this happen only to me or would it have happened to anyone?" It distinguishes

personal helplessness from universal helplessness. It is related to, but not synonymous with locus of control. Abramson, et al. (1978) identifies examples of internal attributions such as: personal failure, unsuccessful trying, a skill others have but I do not, something wrong with me, and possible for others to master but not me. Examples of external attributions are: a misfortune, nothing to try for prevention, no one has any control, fate and, impossible for anyone to change it. She explains that the key is social comparison, not just an evaluation of internal or external causation.

In fact, Abramson, et al. (1978) suggest locus of control as a candidate for a fourth category in attributions. Locus of control asks, "Did I cause this negative, hopeless situation or is it caused by a source outside of me?" Table 2 illustrates the distinction between and interaction of internal/external helplessness and internal/external locus of control. Both internal helplessness and internal causation are associated with deficits in self-esteem. With this framework in mind we will briefly examine some cross-cultural research on locus of control as it relates to the question of third world attributional styles.

Table 2

Locus of Control and Helplessness Attributions Regarding a Negative Event

LOCUS OF CONTROL	HELPLESSNESS (Social Comparison) Personal Internal	Universal External
External	Not my fault. Others would have been successful in the same situation, I was not.	Not my fault. Others would not have been successful either.
Internal	I caused it. Others would have coped successfully, I did not.	I caused it. Others would not have coped successfully either.

The internal/external helplessness attributions have not been directly researched cross-culturally. However, internal/external locus of control has been. (Marsella, 1978; Oddou & Mendenhall, 1984; Sue, 1978). Individuals do differ in how much they view the future as determined by chance, luck, other people or organizations. However, clear cultural differences have not been consistent or conclusive (Hui, 1982).

Some cultures do tend toward passive views of life and control rather than the active, independent style of Americans. But, to what extent does reinforcement occur independent of their own actions? Lonner (1976) questions whether non-western locus of control is correctly understood in western evaluations. He cites research indicating two distinct components within non-Western locus of control:

externality and fatalism. These appear to correspond to Abramson's tenative expansion on the internal/external category of learned helplessness attributions.

Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn (1986) and Azumi (1986) discuss the fine differences in conceptualizations of control between Americans and Japanese. A passive or external locus of control does not necessarily mean a loss of power. For example, Azumi (1986) explains that giving way shows maturity in his culture and gives that individual credibility. He is then supported by elders or peers in more important decision making situations in the future. In Weisz' terms there are actually two kinds of control: primary control is active in a direct manner while secondary control appears passive but is active indirectly. The individual is responsible for certain behavior which, to an outsider, may appear unrelated to the goal. Such secondary control is the appropriate and agreed upon way of interacting in many Asian cultures. The American pride in directness is evaluated as rude and pushy within Oriental norms.

The crucial factor, then, would be perceived contingency of behavior with outcomes. The Oriental could have internal attributions of responsibility regarding a negative event even if secondary control is utilized. The causal statement might be, "I did not show enough honor to my professor and now he is displeased with my paper." The chain of contingent behaviors in the Oriental view might seem circuitous to an American, however it is still a form

of control. One's personal responsibility is to work through the community which will in turn meet the individual's needs. But, in America the Oriental student must adjust to a different set of contingencies in order to accomplish the same goals.

Utilizing a pretest-postest, control group design and follow-up Kagitcibasi (1978) studied the effects of a year in the U.S. on young Turkish students. They displayed a significant increase in self-reported internal control when compared to their original scores on arrival and also in comparison with the matched sample of Turkish students still in Turkey. The Turkish students in the U.S. evidently learned how to navigate within America's system of contingencies.

Even some of the most passive philosophies of life, such as the Hindu resignation to suffering, have an aspect of control. By accepting "karma" one transcends the earthly and will ultimately be rewarded with a better existence in future reincarnations. Learned helplessness theory teaches that real contingency/non-contingency is not as crucial as the individual's <u>expectation</u> of contingency/non-contingency. Abramson, et al. (1978) compared depressed and non-depressed students' perceptions in various contingent and non-contingent situations. Depressed individuals were actually more accurate in judging both contingency and non-contingency. Non-depressed subjects distorted reality and thought they were in control more often than they actually

were!

It is the position of this paper that third world philosophies of life are not more inately helpless; rather, they are one method of control in the world. When everyone follows the same rules, secondary control apparently works as effectively as direct control. However, when different sets of rules collide, negative events increase followed by more possibilities for internal, stable and global attributions to occur. Cultural distance is indicated here; not attributional propensity toward helplessness.

We began by asking whether third world philosophies of life predispose them toward more helplessness and culture shock. Cross-cultural research on depression appears to answer "no." If anything, third world philosophies of life may protect them from one aspect of depression: damage to self-esteem. However, cross-cultural research in locus of control explores control contingencies which exist even within passive cultures. So internal attributions could be made even in these more Eastern worldviews. Either way, non-western peoples apparently tend toward somatic expression of depression rather than psychological and somatic as in America.

There is some evidence that third world people avoid mental health services except in extreme cases. Nonetheless, in surveys third world students consistently report higher levels of stress than American and western students on U.S. campuses. This is evidently due to the

greater number of negative events which third world internationals experience because of cultural distance and ethnic/racial discrimination. There is no substantial evidence at this time that non-western philosophies of life predispose them toward more helplessness. Research directly measuring causal attributions of cultural groups is needed in the areas of depressive symptomology, fine nuances in locus of control and the involvement of self-esteem.

Personal Qualities

Many personality qualities have been investigated in relation to culture shock. Three fairly well substantiated variables will be discussed here.

Positive self-concept or ego strength appears to be related to successful adjustment both before and after the fact. That is, it has been reported as preceeding or correlating with ease of adjustment (Alexander et al., 1981; Barna, 1983; Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982) and as an effect of successful adjustment (Kagitcibasi, 1978; Kleinberg & Hull, 1979).

Crano & Crano (1985) studied 251 South American students in a pre-sojourn/post-sojourn design using a translated version of the revised Janis-Field Self-Concept Scale. These students lived in the U.S. for one year. Those with higher self-concepts prior to leaving their home country adjusted better to life in the U.S. than students with low initial self-concepts. All the students had increased self-concepts at the end of their stay but their

respective rankings did not change.

From a learned helplessness perspective, these studies could be measuring a propensity toward external attributions regarding negative events. Those with self-esteem would be less likely to blame themselves for difficulties. They would probably tend to see problems not as personal, but as something others would suffer in the same situation. Depressed students attribute failures to incompetence (internal, global, stable) while non-depressed students attribute failures to task difficulty (external, specific, stable) (Abramson, et al., 1978). Conversely, depressed students attribute successes to ease of task (external, specific, stable) and non-depressed credit the success to their own ability (internal, global, stable).

Crano & Crano (1985) state:

"The individual with a positive self-concept has experienced acceptance and success quite regularly, and therefore, approaches situations with the expectation of success" (p. 37).

This raises the question of whether some people expect less non-contingency than others. Secure self-concept or self-confidence could describe this. Abramson, et al. (1978) state:

"Reinforcements on previous trials have greater effect on expectancies for future success when the subject perceives reinforcement as skill determined not chance determined" (p. 63).

A possible inter-relationship is suggested here. Internationals with high self-concept might attribute success to skill and failure to chance. If they have experienced considerable success they will expect continued

success. Furthermore, they will expect more success than a peer who has attributed success to chance.

More research is needed to determine if data on self-concept in internationals is tapping into these attributions.

Flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity and non-authoritarian attitude correlate positively with successful adjustment (Barna, 1983; Benson, 1978; Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982; Kagitcibasi, 1978; Kealy & Ruben, 1983; Nishida, 1985; Ruben & Kealy, 1979; Stening, 1979). These words all describe an openess to new experiences and new ways of doing things rather than a rigid, closed minded approach. Brislin (1981) describes persons with these qualities as able to use many dimensions in thinking about an issue: they realize stereotypes should be open to change and can be comfortable even when all aspects of a situation are not clear. In contrast, authoritarian personalities experience more unpleasant aspects during a sojourn than individuals less authoritarian (Stening, 1979).

These data would be consistent with attributions in the stable/unstable category. An individual not restricted to stable attributions could generate other possibilities for current predicaments. Tolerance for amibiguity and openess to new possibilities does not apparently correlate with hopelessness in adversity.

The quality of empathy has been variously defined and measured in international sojourners. Correlating with

sojourn satisfaction, it has been termed courtesy & interest in hosts (Benson, 1978), sociability (Church, 1982), empathy, respect and interest in local culture (Kealy and Ruben, 1983), and relational empathy and non-judgementalism (Ruben & Kealy, 1979).

Ruben & Kealy (1979) found:

"In some cases, at least, the persons who will ultimately be most effective can be expected to undergo the most intense culture shock during transition" (p. 41).

It seems logical that an empathic individual would be bothered by misunderstandings & errors in communication. However, they would also be highly motivated to learn accurate cues. As Miller & Steinberg (1976) defined it, "Communication consists of a continuous effort of making predictions about the behaviors of others while in interaction with them" (p. 105).

Students objectively rated as high in empathic qualities were rated by blind evaluators as higher in imitating the pronunciation of foreign phrases (Guiora, Paluszny, Beit-Hallahmi, Catford, Cooley & Dull, 1975).

In light of these observations, it is anticipated that empathic students might be more attuned to situational details and this would be consistent with specific rather than global attributions. Those aware and interpersonally tuned are more likely to assess unique qualities of each situation. In turn, they would be less inclined to make global generalizations about adjustment difficulties.

The three personal qualities discussed here are also inter-related. The quality of empathy appears to be

inversely related to authoritarianism and ethnocentrism (Stening, 1979). In his review, Brislin (1981) discuses some evidence that empathy correlates with high self-esteem. Ehrlich (1973) found that people with high self-esteem have more positive attitudes toward many out-groups than do people with lower self-esteem.

Flexibility, non-authoritarianism, tolerance for ambiguity, self-concept and empathy all need further research to determine their relation to causal attributions and cultural adjustment. However, the evidence thus far is not inconsistent with reformulated learned helplessness theory.

Length of Stay

The idea that cultural adjustment occurs in stages which have a curvilinear relation to time is known as the U-curve or W-curve hypothesis (Oberg, 1960; Brein & David, 1971; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Although widely accepted and referred to it is unsubstantiated.

The basic concept is that sojourners experience a happy, honeymoon phase of enjoyment when they are newly arrived. However, satisfaction and sense of well-being decline as time passes and the inconvenience of everyday life takes over. As the sojourner learns to navigate in the new environment his adjustment rises again. Hence, the U-curve. A second U-curve represents a re-adjustment curve upon return home. Hence, the W-curve.

This perspective is appealing, perhaps because of its

simplicity. However, empirical studies have found no support for these hypotheses. Klineberg & Hull (1979) found that sojourners did not always begin with a happy phase. Many did experience a time of depression but it was usually at the beginning of the sojourn, not in the middle. The end of the sojourn did tend to be characterized by satisfaction. Spaulding & Flack (1979) also found U-curve studies inconclusive. While some students might follow such a pattern, many others did not.

In their reviews, Brislin (1981) and Church (1982) agree that psychological time is probably more important than chronological time.

This overview on length of stay illustrates the futility of defining adjustment in objective terms such as time frames without taking into account the subjective meaning given to the experience by the sojourner. Each sojourner's attributional schemas probably have more to do with adjustment than the number of months in America.

Summary & Conclusions

The application of reformulated learned helplessness to cultural adjustment contributes to our understanding of culture shock. This can also benefit the validation of the model of reformulated learned helplessness.

Learned helplessness explains the inner processes when a negative, uncontrollable event occurs. Salience of the thwarted goal and strength of expecting non-contingency determine the intensity of the depressive reaction. Stable/unstable and global/specific causal attributions

impact the cognitive and motivational deficits. Self-esteem is damaged if there is an attribution of personal failure. This conceptual framework has been used in this paper to organize variables associated with adjustment which previously seemed unrelated.

Language competence and national origin are pervasive factors in adjustment. They evidently affect the total number of negative events experienced. Difficulties communicating and discrimination adversely impact international students' goals of attaining an academic degree and forming friendships with Americans. In addition, language and national origin also have some attributional dynamics. Students with internal and stable attributions about their language ability will have greater deficits in motivation, cognition and affect regarding improvement. Similarly, the expectations of third world students regarding discrimination (whether realistic or not) can negatively impact their experience. Since there is no evidence that third world students are attributionally prone to more helplessness, greater attention needs to be given to the quality of cultural relations on campuses. Orientations and programs focusing on intercultural experiences need to work at improving international and host relations.

The benefits of prior travel can be given to first timers by educating them regarding cultural adjustment patterns. Realizing that everyone in a new culture experiences culture shock to some degree can help protect

sojourners from internal attributions. Similarly, realizing that culture shock does not last forever and does move into more comfortable phases will mitigate against stable attributions.

Foreign student affairs personnel should make every attempt to help internationals build relationships with both Americans and co-nationals. Hopefully, this will contribute to a cross-cultural experience without the disastrous effects of total immersion. Internationals with co-national support will be less likely to make internal, stable and global attributions about their adjustment difficulties.

Of the personal qualities discussed, self-concept has a clear relation to the attributional category of internal/external helplessness. The other two factors, flexibility and empathy, are not inconsistent with learned helplessness, but further research is needed to delineate the hypothesized relationships.

Finally, length of stay was discussed only because it is commonly taught in orientations and presents an arbitrary pattern of adjustment which does not adequately allow for individual differences and attributions. Empirical research has not substantiated the U or W curve hypotheses and this illustrates the importance of subjective meanings in the adjustment process.

A final consideration is whether the conceptualizations in reformulated learned helplessness are the actual categories which people use when confronted by an

uncontrollable event. This is the question psychologists continue to investigate in America, but little has been done cross-culturally. Such worldwide confirmation would greatly enhance the validity of the model. American behavioral scientists have an unfortunate tendency to make universal conclusions about the human psyche based on studies of American populations. The evaluation in this paper indicates that reformulated learned helplessness might have some applicability cross-culturally. Hopefully, there will be further research in this area.

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